



## **SALTON SEA ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PLAN**

### **SUMMARY OF RELATED PROGRAMS**

#### **How is the Quantification Settlement Agreement related?**

The Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) and QSA-related agreements are agreements among the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), Imperial Irrigation District (IID), Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA), U.S. Department of the Interior, Department of Fish and Game (DFG), and Department of Water Resources. The QSA and related agreements settled long-standing disputes among the local agencies regarding the allocation of Colorado River water within the State of California and provided for long-term water transfers between IID and SDCWA, and IID and CVWD.

The implementing legislation for the QSA is contained in three bills from the 2003 legislative session: Senate Bill 277 (Ducheny), Senate Bill 317 (Kuehl), and Senate Bill 654 (Machado). The legislation provided a framework for the four water agencies to sign the QSA. The restoration of the Salton Sea was provided for in the same legislation, as subsequently amended by Senate Bill 1214 (Kuehl) in the 2004 legislative session.

Although both the QSA and the Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration Plan were addressed in the same legislation, the two are separate projects. The QSA is now being implemented; the Salton Sea ecosystem restoration is a proposed action that will need further legislative approval and environmental permits.

#### **What QSA-related actions are occurring in the watershed and who is carrying out these actions?**

A variety of actions related to the implementation of the QSA are occurring in the watershed. Some of these actions are related to the water transfers themselves and others are actions to mitigate or lessen the impacts of the water transfers. Most of the mitigation actions are required by the State Water Resources Control Board Water Right Order 2003-13. The water right order authorized the water transfers from the IID to CVWD and SDCWA.

Although the QSA and Salton Sea Ecosystem Management Plan are separate projects, the plan will consider the environmental changes that will result from the QSA and the QSA-related actions.

The following QSA-related actions are, or will be occurring in the Salton Sea watershed:

- The QSA water transfers were initiated in 2003. These transfers will occur for 45 years with the possibility of extending out 75 years.
- A Habitat Conservation Plan / Natural Communities Conservation Plan is being developed by CVWD, IID and SDCWA to lessen the water transfers' impacts to biological resources. The QSA requires the local agencies to use best efforts to complete the plan by the end of 2006.

- A Joint Powers Authority was formed which includes DFG, CVWD, IID and SDCWA. The authority administers funds for mitigating impacts of the QSA.
- IID and SDCWA have established the Local Entity to assess socioeconomic impacts of land fallowing associated with their water transfer and to administer mitigation funding.

In addition, IID, CVWD and SDCWA shall jointly fund and implement the following actions to mitigate the impacts of the water transfers as directed by the State Water Resource Control Board's Water Right Order:

- The delivery of water to the Salton Sea to manage elevation and salinity is required from 2003 through 2017.
- An air quality monitoring and mitigation plan to address air quality impacts of the water transfers shall be prepared. Specific mitigation actions are to be implemented for construction, fallowing and exposure of lakebed.
- A report on selenium discharged to the Salton Sea shall be prepared prior to implementing certain water conservation measures.
- Specific conservation actions for tamarisk scrub, drain habitat and desert pupfish shall be implemented for the term of the transfers.
- Recreational facilities shall be relocated as the Sea's shoreline recedes.

### **What other programs are occurring in the watershed and who is carrying out these programs?**

There are a variety of other programs occurring in the Salton Sea watershed. These programs are being conducted by local, state and federal agencies. There are too many ongoing or planned programs to list them all here, but a few are provided below.

- The Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board is developing and implementing Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) programs for a variety of water quality contaminants in the New, Alamo and Whitewater rivers, in the Imperial Valley drains, and at the Salton Sea.
- The local air quality control districts conduct on-going air quality monitoring throughout the watershed. The districts also prepare and implement plans to address existing air quality problems.
- The Coachella Valley Association of Governments is preparing a Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan that describes preservation of habitat in the valley as far south as the Imperial County line. A draft plan was released in late 2004.
- The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the Imperial Irrigation District, the Citizen's Congressional Task Force on the New River, and others are involved in a pilot project for constructed wetlands.
- CVWD is implementing the Coachella Valley Water Management Plan. The Plan establishes an overall program for managing the District's surface and groundwater resources in the future.

The Resources Agency is working with these and numerous other agencies to utilizing existing information to the extent possible and minimize overlapping efforts.